

GUIDELINES
FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS
IN SCHOOLS



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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GUIDELINES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS IN SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH

The word liturgy comes from the Greek word, *leitourgia*, which is best translated “the public work”. It refers to work that is done as a public service on behalf of the people, for example, the citizens of a country or city. It is a work that is deemed necessary for the welfare of the community. In the context of the Christian community, the liturgy is a public work (as distinct from a private activity) which is carried out as an act of service for the benefit of the entire Church, or, we might say for the salvation of the People of God. It is the principal means by which the members of the Church give glory to God, which is their sacred duty.

There are many forms of liturgical celebration that have developed over the course of centuries: the Mass, the Sacraments, Eucharistic Adoration, Rites for Marriage, and for Christian Burial, Celebrations of the Word of God, and Blessings. Each liturgical celebration has its proper place and time in the life of the Christian community.

In the liturgy, all members of the Church unite themselves with Jesus Christ and his Paschal Mystery, i.e. his suffering, death and resurrection, and ascension to Spirit-filled glory. At the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Bishops of the Church reminded us that the “full, conscious and active participation of all the people is the aim to be considered above all else” when preparing and celebrating the liturgy, and this is because the liturgy “is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 14).

In order to unite all the faithful in the action of Jesus Christ, attention must be paid to the various ways he is present in the liturgy: in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, in the Scriptures proclaimed, in the sacred ministers, and in each member of the community assembled for the celebration, and in their words, the songs, and the ritual actions (see *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 7).

THE LANGUAGE OF LITURGICAL PRAYER

During the public prayer of the Church, God communicates to us and we communicate to God using words for sure. But we also communicate with one another using the language of signs and symbols, gestures and movements, colour and sound. We engage all of our senses in this encounter with our God who draws us into the experience on earth of the heavenly liturgy.

For this reason, great attention must be given to the preparation of the space and environment in which we celebrate, the authenticity of the symbols (the objects) we use, our common postures and gestures, the spoken texts, the songs that are sung, and how we move during the celebration.

A WORD ABOUT RITUAL

The liturgy of the Church is by its very nature a ritual action which is capable of engaging the participation of all who assemble for the celebration. Ritual is first of all repetitive. Participants know what to expect and can participate in the words and actions immediately. In common rituals which have been agreed upon and handed on to us through the pastors of the Church, we discover the meaning of God's saving action in our lives and are led to an encounter with God. In a world which today values so much that which is new or innovative, the value of ritual can be, at times, difficult to grasp. Nevertheless, by becoming familiar with the rituals of the liturgy (how we speak, the symbols we use, and how we act), we open ourselves to the presence of the God whom we worship and we make a space within ourselves for God to enter our lives.

It is important for young people in our school communities to become familiar with the rituals of the liturgy so that when they join the Parish community for Sunday Mass, they are able to participate fully in the liturgy and have a genuine encounter with the Lord. We can rightly consider special celebrations with young people as initiation into the liturgical life of the entire community.

PLANNING OR PREPARING

Many people speak of planning liturgical celebrations. Actually the liturgy is already planned for us. All of our approved liturgical books contain the "plan" of the liturgy. They identify the various roles of the participants, they tell us what we say and do and when we speak and act, they indicate how the liturgy is to unfold. Our liturgical books are like recipe books, which guide us to prepare a meaningful liturgy in which we celebrate our life in Christ and worship God.

Therefore, the role of the priest, chaplaincy leader, teacher, or other staff is not to plan but rather to prepare the liturgy – to make sure that all that is provided is ready and that all are prepared to take their part in the celebration.

In the context of the school, this means ensuring that all the physical requirements of the liturgy are in place, that those exercising special ministries know what they are to do, that everyone is familiar with prayers, songs, and responses for this particular celebration, and that all know the meaning and significance of the signs and symbols that will be used in the liturgy.

BASIC RESOURCES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

The norms for celebrating the liturgy are to be found in the various liturgical books approved for use in Canada. Each book contains a comprehensive instruction on the celebration as well as the texts and ritual actions for the particular rite.

When celebrating the Mass, we are guided by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* which came into effect in Advent 2011, when the fifth edition of the Roman Missal was introduced in the Church in Canada. We are also guided by *Gathered into One*, Bishop Douglas Crosby's pastoral letter on the liturgy (March 25, 2018).

When celebrating the Liturgy of the Word, we are guided by our ritual books, which provide forms for the celebration of some of the Sacraments in the context of a Liturgy of the Word (“outside Mass”). Other prayer services have a less defined structure, but rely on the repertoire of prayers, scripture readings, and songs used during Mass, and celebrations of the Sacraments.

DETERMINING HOW WE WILL CELEBRATE

The form of the liturgical celebration which will take place in a school community (in the parish church or in the school building) is to be determined through a collaborative effort of the presider (priest, deacon, or lay leader) and the teacher(s) and other staff who will assist the students in their preparation for the celebration. The following questions need to be addressed:

- What are we celebrating?
(a feast, an event, a season...)
- What liturgical season are we in?
(Advent, Lent, Christmas, Easter, Ordinary Time)
- Who will be celebrating?
(entire school community, one class or grade level, students only, with parents, with parishioners, staff only, only Catholics, inter-religious community...)
- Where will we celebrate?
(church, school, classroom, other...)
- When will the celebration take place?
(date and time)
- How will we celebrate?
(Mass, Liturgy of the Word, Prayer Service ...)
- What resources do we need to consult?
(Liturgical Calendar (Ordo), Roman Missal, Lectionary, Book of Blessings, Parish Hymnals ...)*
- Who will preside?
(Priest, deacon, parish minister, teacher ...)
- What ministers are needed?
(readers, servers, music ministers, gift bearers ...)
- What things need to be prepared in the space?
(depending on the space and celebration: altar, lectern, vessels and linens for Mass, liturgical books, decorations, seating, sound system, musical instruments, other ...)

*The *Liturgical Calendar (Ordo)* will indicate if the date of the celebration falls on a solemnity or feast of the Church year which must be observed when Mass is celebrated.

Note: The “theme” of every liturgical celebration is the Paschal Mystery. The purpose of every liturgical celebration is for us to enter more completely into the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection and to give praise and thanks to God for our share in Christ’s life.

Once the above questions have been discussed, the liturgy can be prepared. See the following notes for each type of celebration.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (MASS)

INTRODUCTION

The celebration of the Eucharist is always a celebration of the Paschal Mystery: Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, and our share in this saving mystery. All who gather for Mass are invited to participate fully in the hymns, prayers, responses, and gestures which are proper to the liturgy. They are likewise invited to participate by spiritually uniting themselves with Christ, whose sacrifice is renewed in each celebration of the Eucharist.

Those who exercise liturgical ministries (e.g., lectors, extraordinary ministers of Communion, altar servers, music ministers) need to be prepared prior to the celebration. This is especially important when children and young adults will be exercising these ministries in an unfamiliar environment. They will feel more secure if they can practise their roles in the space ahead of time.

Since many students may not attend Sunday Mass on a regular basis, it will be necessary to review the songs, prayers, and responses with which they are to participate. The entire community should prepare during the days immediately preceding the celebration.

In general, the weekday celebration of Mass should resemble the Sunday celebration in the Parish. The active participation of the students will be fostered if, for example, the choice of music for hymns and acclamations are those used in the Parish community.

Before completing the preparation sheet (page 12), it is important to review the following notes which are based on the norms for the preparation and celebration of Mass which are found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and affirmed in *Gathered into One*. The *GIRM* indicates when, why, and how things are to be done in the liturgy.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment relates to the arrangement of the sacred space in which liturgical celebrations take place which ensures that the principal places where Christ is made present in the liturgy are highlighted and that all can participate fully in the celebration.

Place for Mass: Church or School

The usual and preferred place for Mass is the church, since this is the usual place where the Catholic community gathers on the Lord's Day. Celebrations in the church highlight the fact that the school community is part of the Parish community.

When it is not possible to celebrate a school Mass in the church (e.g., the church is a long distance from the school, or weather impedes transportation of the students), it may take place in the school. In this case, special attention needs to be paid to the preparation and arrangement of the space.

Altar

The altar is the focal point for the celebration of Mass, for it is the “centre of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist” (*GIRM, 296*).

- Ensure that the altar is centrally located (*GIRM, 299*).
- Cover the altar with a white cloth suited to the size and shape of the altar (*GIRM, 117, 304*).
- With the exception of candles, nothing else is placed on the altar prior to the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Ambo

The Word of God is always to be proclaimed from a special place, from the Ambo or lectern, which is placed in clear view of the faithful (*GIRM, 309*).

- Ensure that the ambo is located in proximity to the altar, since the community is fed by the Lord from these two tables.

Presider’s Chair

The role of the priest at Mass is to preside over and direct the prayer of the community. Therefore, it must be suitably placed (*GIRM, 310*).

- Ensure that the chair faces the assembly and is located at the front of the room. It may be placed on the opposite side of the altar from the ambo.
- Beside the chair, provide a place for the Roman Missal and a hymnal. It is from the chair that the priest will pray the opening and closing prayers of the Mass (*GIRM, 117*).

Cross

The Cross, with a figure of the crucified Christ, is placed near the altar (*GIRM, 117, 308*). This may be the processional cross which is used for the entrance of the priest and other ministers (*GIRM, 117, 350*).

- Place the stand for the Cross in place near the altar prior to the beginning of Mass.
- The Cross is not placed on the altar.

Candles

Lighted candles are placed on or near the altar (*GIRM, 117*), and may be carried in the entrance procession.

- At least two candles are required for the celebration of Mass and, depending on the size of candles, they may be either placed on the altar or on the floor next to the altar.

Credence Table

The credence table is a small table placed near the altar and is used for the sacred vessels, chalice, ciboria, altar linens, bowl and water, towel, and the Roman Missal to be used at the altar. (*GIRM, 118*).

- Place a small table near the altar, perhaps behind the altar.
- Cover the table with a white cloth.

Gift Table

It is fitting that some students present the bread and wine, and any gifts for the poor during the offertory of the Mass. A small table for these can be placed near the back of the assembly.

Additional Seating

In addition to providing seating for the assembly, it is important to arrange for seating for altar servers, including the cross bearer and the server who will hold the Book for the priest at the chair. If a deacon is present, he should have a seat provided beside the presiding priest.

Seating for musicians ought to be provided near the front of the space, not far from the altar, so that they effectively lead the assembly in song.

Sound System

As the spoken word is the primary means of communication, ensure that adequate sound reinforcement is in place.

- Provide a microphone for the presider (chair and altar).
- Provide a microphone at the ambo.
- Provide microphones for the musicians, especially the cantor or leader of song.
- Complete a sound check with the ministers prior to the start of Mass.

Banners and Other Visual Elements related to the Season or Feast

The use of colour by way of fabric arts, as well as real flowers, can help create a space conducive for liturgical prayer.

- Ensure that any banners are located away from the altar which is the focal point of the celebration.
- When using floral arrangements, do so with moderation (*GIRM*, 305).
- Be sensitive to the liturgical season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time) as well as any feast on which the Mass is celebrated.

Audio-Visual Assistance

When Mass is celebrated in a school, it may be necessary to have some kind of overhead projection for some of the prayers, responses and music. The screen(s) must be visible to all and the texts must be large enough to be seen by all. Copyright permission must be obtained for any music that is projected (even when only the lyrics are projected). Finally, religious images or explanatory texts are not to be displayed during the prayers said by the presider.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Priest Celebrant (Presider)

The priest presides over the assembly and directs its prayer.

- The presidential prayers (for example, Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, Eucharistic Prayer, Prayer after Communion, the Gospel and homily), and other roles pertaining to the priest may not be assigned to another.

Altar Servers: Cross Bearer, and Candle Bearers

The altar servers assist the community to celebrate the Eucharist and worship God.

- Altar servers may wear the alb or other suitable attire (*GIRM*, 339).
- Altar servers need to be properly trained for their roles.

Lectors

With the exception of the Gospel, all Scripture readings are proclaimed by the lector (*GIRM, 99*).

- The readings (one or two) before the Gospel, are assigned to different readers (*Introduction to the Lectionary, 52*).
- Readings are proclaimed from the Lectionary (not from individual papers).
- The Lectionary is not carried in procession at the beginning of Mass. If the Book of the Gospels is used, it may be carried by a lector (in the absence of a deacon).
- Only baptized members of the Church are permitted to proclaim the Scriptures during Mass.
- The readings are all proclaimed from the ambo. They are proclaimed clearly, with sufficient volume, and are unhurried.
- If not sung, one lector may proclaim the Responsorial Psalm from the ambo.
- In the absence of a deacon, a lector, or several readers, may announce the petitions of the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) (*GIRM, 99,197*). See page 15 under “Petitions” for further assistance.

Gift Bearers

Members of the assembly present the gifts of bread and wine (*GIRM, 44, 73*). Gifts related to the needs of the Church and for the poor may also be presented (*GIRM, 140*), after the bread and wine have been presented.

- Those presenting gifts need to be rehearsed before the liturgy.
- The gifts are accepted by the Priest or deacon (*GIRM, 73*).
- No other symbols are presented at this time.

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

The ordinary minister of Communion is the Bishop, Priest or deacon. As needed, extraordinary ministers from among the laity, may assist.

- Extraordinary ministers of Communion are to be prepared and mandated by the Bishop, as per Diocesan Guidelines (*GIRM, 98*). They may also be mandated by the presider for a given celebration only. For example, if there are no mandated ministers of communion present, the priest may ask a staff member for assistance at this particular Mass.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Communion are fully initiated members of the Church.

Music Ministers

Music ministers are servants of the liturgy. Singing is an integral element of every liturgical celebration and care must be taken to ensure that it is included in celebrations (*GIRM, 39-40*).

- Musicians select appropriate hymns that foster the participation of all in the assembly (*GIRM, 41*).
- It is preferable that the following parts of the Mass be sung: Gloria (when required), Holy Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Amen.
- Music for the liturgy must be of good quality and allow for the assembly to join in the singing. It must be suited to the liturgy and, generally, inspired by the Scriptures. Finally, the music chosen ought to enable the members of this particular assembly to express their faith.

Mass Coordinator

The Mass coordinator (or a coordinating team) ensures that the space is prepared for Mass, that the ministers have been prepared (rehearsed as necessary), and that the presider is informed of choices made regarding readings and music and who is exercising the various ministries.

Hospitality

Some members of the community (staff and students) may act as ministers of hospitality, welcoming people, assisting with seating, and perhaps directing people to Communion stations.

OUTLINE OF THE MASS – A QUICK REFERENCE

Introduction to the Mass

As required, a member of the school staff may make some introductory remarks prior to the entrance procession. This might include a reminder that all are encouraged to participate in the celebration by their prayers and songs, and to remain prayerful during the moments of silence. It may be necessary to offer a brief instruction regarding the Communion procession, especially if Mass is not celebrated in a church. It is not necessary to go to lengths to explain the season or feast; this is usually addressed by the presider.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

The Entrance Song (hymn)

This marks the beginning of the celebration and is sung by the entire assembly.

Procession

The procession is led by the Cross and Candle Bearers with lighted candles. The Book of the Gospels (if used) is carried by a reader (in the absence of a deacon). Concelebrating priests come next, and finally the presider.

Greeting

Led by the presider.

Penitential Act

Led by the presider.

Gloria (if required)

Led by the musicians.

Collect (Opening Prayer)

Prayed by the presider.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

All readings are taken from the Lectionary. The readings of the day may be used (*GIRM*, 757). However, if alternative readings are desired, these must be approved in advance by the presider.

First Reading

The reader bows to the altar and goes to the ambo (*GIRM, 128*). One person reads the entire text (*GIRM, 109*). A period of silence is observed following the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

Whenever possible this is to be sung (*GIRM, 61*); however, it may be proclaimed by the lector (one reader) at the ambo.

Second Reading

A second reading may be proclaimed, especially if the celebration takes place on a solemnity or feast. The reader bows to the altar and goes to the ambo and proclaims the scripture passage, as was done with the first reading. A period of silence follows.

Gospel Acclamation

The Gospel Acclamation is either sung or omitted. It is ideal to sing the entire acclamation. If this is not possible, at least sing the Alleluia (or Lenten Acclamation).

Gospel

The Gospel is proclaimed by the Priest or deacon.

Homily

The homily is given by the Priest or deacon. A period of silence follows.

Creed

The Creed is said only when the liturgical books demand it. This rarely occurs on a weekday.

Universal Prayer

The Prayer of the Faithful is introduced by the presider. One or more people can announce the petitions in the absence of a deacon. See page 15 for more information under “Petitions” and page 22 for information regarding the structure and preparation of this prayer.

The sequence of petitions is as follows (*GIRM, 70*):

- for the needs of the Church;
- for public authorities and the salvation of the world;
- for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- for the local community.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts

Offerings of bread and wine (no water) are presented by members of the assembly (*GIRM, 44, 73*). Appropriate offerings for the poor may also be brought forward after the bread and wine (*GIRM, 73, 140*). All are accepted by the priest. No other items are presented at this time. A hymn may be sung at this time or instrumental music used.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the presider. All join in the acclamations (Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Amen) – preferably sung.

The Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer is introduced by the presider and all say the prayer together.

Sign of Peace

The Sign of Peace is optional. If it is offered, it is offered only to the person(s) beside one.

Breaking of Bread

The Lamb of God may be recited or sung by all.

Communion Procession

The Communion song, preferably with a refrain that can be sung by all, begins when the presider receives communion. A single hymn is used and continues until that last person has received; verses may be repeated.

A period of silence follows (*GIRM*, 88).

Prayer after Communion

After the period of silent prayer, the presider prays the Prayer after Communion.

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

The presider blesses the assembly and, in the absence of a deacon, dismisses the people.

Recessional Hymn

This should be a song that all know. After the priest has venerated the altar, he is led out of the place by the Cross bearer and Candle bearers. Neither the *Lectionary* nor the *Book of Gospels* is carried out.

Instructions for Dismissal

Following the end of Mass, a member of the staff may wish to give instructions for leaving the church or worship space.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Postures

Postures will vary depending on the location of the celebration. When Mass is celebrated in a church, the postures observed at Sunday Mass are assumed. If the Mass takes place in a school setting, postures (when we stand, sit, kneel) should be determined in consultation with the presider.

Preparing for the Communion Procession

Communion stations should be located at the front of the church or worship space in the school. These should be identified prior to the beginning of the Mass and announced to the assembly.

If there are a large number of primary grade students present who have not yet received their First Communion, the presider may speak to them prior to distributing Communion, using these or similar words: *Boys and girls, since you have not yet made your First Communion, I ask that you remain in your places. We look forward to the day when you will be able to join us at the Lord's Table. Until then, let us pray for one another.*

If students or staff members come forward who are not able to receive Communion, they are to be acknowledged in these or similar words: *May Christ be with you.* (This greeting is distinguished from the Blessing that all receive at the end of Mass.)

PREPARATION SHEET – CELEBRATION OF MASS

| | | | |
|-------------|--|------|--|
| Celebration | | Date | |
| Place | | Time | |
| Rehearsal | | Date | |
| | | Time | |

Set up – if not in church

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altar | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross & Candles | <input type="checkbox"/> Lectionary | <input type="checkbox"/> Seating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambo | <input type="checkbox"/> Credence Table | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacred Vessels | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound System |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presider`s Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Roman Missal | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Table | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-visual |

Liturgical Ministers

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Priest | |
| Servers (3) | |
| Lectors (1 or 2) | |
| Petitions (1-5) | |
| Gift Bearers (2) | |
| Extraordinary Ministers of Communion | |
| Music Minister(s) | |
| Coordinator | |
| Hospitality | |
| Environment | |
| Introduction to Mass | |

Music for Mass

| | |
|--|--|
| Entrance Song | |
| Penitential Act (Kyrie) | |
| Gloria (if required) | |
| Responsorial Psalm | |
| Gospel Acclamation | |
| Offertory Song | |
| Eucharistic Acclamations Holy, Holy, Holy Memorial Acclamation Amen | |
| Lamb of God | |
| Communion Song | |
| Recessional Song | |
| Locations for Communion | |

LITURGIES OF THE WORD

INTRODUCTION

Another kind of liturgical celebration is the Liturgy of the Word. The entire school community or individual classes may celebrate a Liturgy of the Word. A Priest or deacon may preside at this celebration; however, a Priest is not required for this celebration to take place. A layperson can preside at a Liturgy of the Word. This form of the liturgy is modelled on the First part of the Mass which is called the Liturgy of the Word. The norms which guide our celebration of Mass (the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*) apply also to the celebrations of the Word.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment relates to the arrangement of the sacred space which enables all to participate fully in the celebration. When celebrations take place in the church, all that is needed is in place. When the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in a school setting, the following elements should be in place.

Lectern

Since the celebration centres on the proclamation of God's word, a dignified lectern should hold a prominent place in the worship space. It should be suitably placed in clear view of the assembly and, depending on the size of the space, should have a microphone. Since the Eucharist is not being celebrated, there is no need for the presence of an altar.

Presider's Chair

A chair for the presider (a Priest, a deacon, or a layperson) who will lead the celebration and direct the prayer, ought to be located at the front of the space in clear view of the assembly. The chair faces the assembly. Beside the chair a small table may be placed for the presider's book and hymnal.

Cross

A Cross, with a figure of the crucified Christ should be located in clear view of the assembly. This may be a processional Cross, used for the entrance procession, or may be a large Cross on the wall of the space. If using a processional Cross, the stand should be placed near the lectern.

Candles

Processional candles may be carried by servers who accompany the Cross in the entrance procession. They are placed beside the Cross or beside the lectern. If smaller candles are used, they may be placed on a table near the lectern.

Music

Seating for musicians ought to be provided near the front of the space, not far from the presider, so that they effectively lead the assembly in song.

Seating

In addition to seating for the presider and assembly, seating should be provided for servers, other ministers, and for musicians. If a priest presides and a deacon assists, a seat for the deacon will also be needed.

Sound System

As the spoken word is the primary means of communication, ensure that adequate sound reinforcement is in place.

- Provide a microphone for the presider (chair).
- Provide a microphone at the lectern.
- Provide microphones for the musicians, especially the cantor or leader of song.
- Complete a sound check with the ministers prior to the start of the liturgy.

Banners and Other Visual Elements related to the Season or Feast

The use of colour by way of fabric arts, as well as real flowers, can help create a space conducive for liturgical prayer.

- Ensure that any banners are located away from the lectern which is the focal point of the celebration.
- When using floral arrangements, do so with moderation.
- Be sensitive to the liturgical season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time) as well as any feast on which the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated.

Audio-Visual Assistance

When the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in a school, it may be necessary to have some kind of projection for some of the prayers, responses, and music. The screen(s) must be visible to all and the texts must be large enough to be seen by all. Copyright permission must be obtained for any music that is projected, even if only the lyrics are projected. Finally, religious images or explanatory texts are not to be displayed during the prayers said by the presider.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Presider

The presider oversees and directs the assembly's prayer. There is only one presider, who may be one of the following: Priest, deacon, chaplaincy leader, principal or vice-principal, teacher or other staff member.

The presider begins the celebration with the Sign of the Cross and greeting and says the opening prayer, may read the Gospel and give a reflection, introduces and concludes the prayers of the faithful, and leads the concluding rites.

Servers

The servers may carry the Cross and candles at the beginning of the celebration as at Mass. A server holds the book for the presider and servers may hold candles beside the lectern if the Gospel is proclaimed. They may be vested in an alb or other suitable attire. All servers are to be trained for their ministry.

Lectors

Whenever there is more than one reading from Sacred Scripture, each reading may be assigned to a different lector. Only those who are baptized may proclaim the Word of God. One of the readers fittingly carries the Lectionary or Bible in the entrance procession (directly behind the Cross and candles) and places it on the lectern at the beginning of the celebration.

The lector must be a competent reader who is carefully prepared to proclaim the Word of God clearly and with dignity. The lector should practice with the microphone before the celebration.

Cantor or Leader of Song

It is important to have someone lead the songs in which the assembly will participate. Whenever possible the Responsorial Psalm should be sung by a cantor. If it is not possible to sing the psalm (or at least the refrain) a lector may read the verses and all join in the response. There is no need to use arm gestures to assist the assembly in singing the refrain. The reader only needs to look up from the text to prompt the assembly's response.

Petitions

One or more students ought to be invited to announce the petitions, in the absence of a deacon. The presider introduces and concludes the prayer. The petitions are announced from the lectern where the Word of God has been proclaimed. The readers should practice with the microphone before the celebration. There is no need to use arm gestures to assist the assembly in making the response. The cue is the words: We pray to the Lord. Usually four or five petitions are included.

Musicians

In addition to the cantor or leader of song, additional musicians may be engaged to select and support the song of the assembly. Music for the liturgy must be of good quality and allow for the assembly to join in the singing. It must be suited to the liturgy and, generally, inspired by the Scriptures. Finally, the music chosen ought to enable the members of this particular assembly to express their faith.

Environment

One or more persons are needed to ensure that the space is set up for the celebration as outlined above.

Hospitality

Some members of the community (staff and students) may act as ministers of hospitality, welcoming people and assisting them with seating.

Liturgy Coordinator

The Liturgy coordinator (or a team) ensures that the space is prepared for the Liturgy of the Word and that the ministers have been prepared (rehearsed as necessary) and that the presider is informed of choices made regarding readings and music, and who is exercising ministries.

OUTLINE OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD – A QUICK REFERENCE

Introduction to the Celebration

As required, a member of the school staff may make some introductory remarks prior to the entrance procession. This might include a reminder that all are encouraged to participate in the celebration by their prayers and songs, and to remain prayerful during the moments of silence. It is not necessary to go to lengths to explain the season or feast; this is usually addressed by the presider.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Song

It is fitting to begin a celebration of the word of God with a hymn that is known by all in the assembly; it is ideally chosen from the parish music repertoire.

Entrance Procession

The entrance procession, accompanied by song, includes the Cross, candles, the Lectionary (carried by deacon or one of the readers) and the presider. It may be possible to include additional symbols relevant to the celebration; however, these must be approved by the presider. It may be more appropriate to place these symbols on display prior to the beginning of the celebration.

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

Following the entrance song, all make the sign of the Cross. If the presider is a priest or deacon, he greets the assembly with the usual apostolic greeting (The Lord be with you). A layperson omits this. The presider may briefly draw everyone's attention to the season or feast which is being celebrated.

Opening Prayer

The presider says: "*Let us pray*", and after a moment of silence, says the Opening Prayer. Then all are seated for the first reading from Sacred Scripture.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

All readings are taken from the Lectionary. No one should read from a paper. The readings of the day may be used or special readings may be chosen from the Bible for the celebration.

First Reading

The reader goes to the lectern and proclaims the reading. A period of silence is observed following the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

Whenever possible this is to be sung; however, it may be proclaimed by the lector at the lectern. It is also possible for the lector to read the verses and the assembly to sing the response.

Second Reading

A second reading may be proclaimed, especially if the celebration takes place on a solemnity or feast. The reader

goes to the lectern and proclaims the reading, as was done with the first reading. A period of silence follows.

Gospel Acclamation

The Gospel Acclamation is either sung or omitted. It is ideal to sing the entire acclamation. If this is not possible, at least sing the Alleluia (or Lenten Acclamation).

Gospel

The Gospel is proclaimed by the Priest or deacon. When a layperson proclaims the Gospel, the greeting (The Lord be with you), is omitted. A period of silence follows.

Homily/Reflection

A homily may be given by the Priest or deacon. A reflection may be given by a layperson. A period of silence follows.

Universal Prayer

The Prayer of the Faithful is introduced by the presider. One or more people can announce the petitions in the absence of a deacon. See page 15 for more information under “Petitions” and page 22 for information regarding the structure and preparation of this prayer.

The sequence of petitions is as follows (*GIRM, 70*):

- for the needs of the Church;
- for public authorities and the salvation of the world;
- for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- for the local community.

CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer is introduced by the presider and all say the prayer together.

Sign of Peace

The sign of Peace may be given. If it is offered, it is offered only to the person(s) beside one.

Concluding Prayer

This is said by the presider.

Blessing

The presider (if a Priest or deacon) blesses the assembly and dismisses the people. When a layperson presides, he or she says the following words while making the sign of the cross on their body: ***May almighty God bless us, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.***

Recessional Hymn

The celebration may conclude with a song that all know. The presider is led out of the place by the Cross bearer and Candle bearers. The Lectionary is not carried out.

Instructions for Dismissal

Following the end of the liturgy, a member of the staff may wish to give instructions for leaving the church or worship space.

PREPARATION SHEET – LITURGY OF THE WORD

| | | | |
|-------------|--|------|--|
| Celebration | | Date | |
| Place | | Time | |
| Rehearsal | | Date | |
| | | Time | |

Set up – if not in church

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectern | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross and Candles | <input type="checkbox"/> Lectionary | <input type="checkbox"/> Seating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presider’s chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Presider’s Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound System | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-visual |

Liturgical Ministers

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Presider | |
| Servers (3) | |
| Lectors (1 or 2) | |
| Cantor/Leader of Song | |
| Music Ministers | |
| Petitions (1-5) | |
| Liturgy Coordinator | |
| Hospitality | |
| Environment | |
| Introduction to Liturgy | |

Music for the Liturgy of the Word

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Entrance Song | |
| Responsorial Psalm | |
| Gospel Acclamation | |
| Closing Song | |

PRAYER SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

There are occasions when the entire school community or a class gathers for devotional prayer, such as the rosary during the month of May, the lighting of the Advent wreath, or Stations of the Cross during Lent, or the crowning of an image of Mary during the month of May. There may also be times when the school community gathers to prayerfully commemorate a civic observance, such as Thanksgiving Day or Remembrance Day, or to acknowledge accomplishments of staff or students, or in memory of a member of the community who has died. Such celebrations usually do not take place in the parish church and are often less formal than liturgical celebrations and do not follow strictly the norms for the liturgy. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that our liturgical prayer always ought to overflow into our devotional prayer and that our devotional prayer always ought to lead us to the liturgy (see *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 13), some liturgical elements are fittingly included in such celebrations.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment for a prayer service may resemble that for the liturgy, except that there is no altar or ambo. However, a focal point ought to be established, such as a prayer table which may include a Cross, candles, flowers, or other symbols of our Christian faith. There should be designated seating for those who will lead the celebration. In a celebration with the entire community, there should also be a lectern and microphone.

In order to facilitate participation on the part of the assembly, it may be necessary to have some kind of projection for some of the prayers, responses, and music. The screen(s) must be visible to all and the texts must be large enough to be seen by all. Copyright permission must be obtained for any music that is projected, even if only the lyrics are projected.

OUTLINE OF A DEVOTIONAL PRAYER SERVICE

The shape of a Prayer Service resembles the outline of liturgical prayer. It usually includes the following:

- Introductory Rite
- Reading(s)
- Action
- Concluding Rite

Introductory Rite

This may include a brief introduction, a gathering song, the sign of the Cross, and an opening prayer.

Readings

Every form of devotional prayer ought to include at least one reading from the Scriptures. Additional readings may also be included, such as a poem or devotional reflection. It is not necessary to include a responsorial psalm or hymn during this part of the celebration.

Action

The action could be a ritual action or prayer, such as the lighting of the advent wreath, or the praying of the rosary, or bringing forward food for the poor at Thanksgiving, or placing poppies on a cross for Remembrance Day, or crowning an image of Mary during the month of May, or the presentation of awards, etc. The action could also be a dramatization (such as the Stations of the Cross), the presentation of a video, a reflection by a guest speaker, a choral presentation, etc.

Concluding Rite

The celebration may conclude with some form of intercessory prayer, such as the Prayer of the Faithful, a devotional prayer or prayer from the liturgy, or Lord's Prayer, and the sign of the Cross. A song may also be sung to conclude the celebration.

SOME RESOURCES

For prayers:

The Roman Missal, Canadian edition, copyright © Concacan Inc., 2011.

This provides prayers for feasts and seasons of the liturgical year, as well as a wide selection of prayers for various needs and occasions.

Blessings and Prayers for the Home and Family, copyright © Concacan Inc., 2004.

This provides a wide variety of prayers for special events in the life of Catholics, for special needs and occasions, for civic and school events. These may be used or adapted for school celebrations.

For Scripture readings:

Lectionary: Ritual Masses, Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, Votive Masses, Masses for the Dead, copyright © Concacan Inc., 2014.

This book provides a wide selection of readings for various needs and occasions in the Christian life as well as for civic and public needs.

For Music:

When considering music for a prayer service, at least one hymn that can be sung by all should be included. This is normally taken from a hymnal approved for liturgical use in Canada. Other religious music may be incorporated during the action or at the conclusion of the celebration.

APPENDIX A

Preparing Intercessions for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

“In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that the petitions may be offered for Holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world.” (*GIRM*, 69)

“The series of intentions is usually to be:

- a) for the needs of the Church;
- b) for public authorities and for the salvation of the whole world;
- c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- d) for the local community.” (*GIRM*, 70)

Petitions may also be offered which are associated with the particular occasion.

“It is for the Priest Celebrant to regulate this prayer from the chair. He himself begins with a brief introduction, by which he calls upon the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes with an oration. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should express the prayer of the entire community... the people, for their part, stand and give expression to the prayer...” (*GIRM*, 71)

Note: This structure and content applies to intercessions during Mass and during a celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

Some possible formulas for the petitions:

The response is addressed to the Lord, such as:

For ... (use the cue “We pray/Let us pray”...)

OR

That... (use the cue “We pray/Let us pray”...)

Lord, hear our prayer. OR

Lord in your mercy, hear us. OR

Lord, have mercy.

APPENDIX B

Selecting Music for the Celebration

When selecting music for the celebration, keep in mind the following principles:

1. The participation of the entire assembly is to be enabled by the choice of music.
2. Songs chosen for the liturgy express the prayer of the Church and the texts are addressed to God.
3. Songs which are sung during the liturgy are normally taken from the hymnal used in the Parish.
4. Music for the Ordinary of the Mass (e.g., the Holy, Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, Lamb of God) must use the words of these texts found in the Roman Missal, and be settings that are commonly known in the community.
5. The text for the Responsorial Psalm must be the text found in the Lectionary for Mass.
6. When selecting sung parts for any liturgy, priority is given to the Entrance Song, the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation. In addition, when the Eucharist is celebrated, the Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Amen) and the Communion Processional Song are to be given priority.
7. It is always important to rehearse the songs, responses, and acclamations with the assembly before the celebration. This may be done in the classroom or in a school assembly prior to the celebration.

